

Be Prepared For Fire!

Once a fire starts, it spreads quickly. Since you won't have much time to get out of the house, and since there may be a lot of confusion when a fire starts, it makes sense to practice an escape plan ahead of time to prepare yourself in case there's ever an actual fire.

When you develop your emergency escape plan, make sure that you know two ways out of every room in your home in case fire prevents you from leaving by your usual exit.

Have a practice fire drill in your home from time to time to make sure everyone knows how to escape quickly and safely!

**Developing and practicing
a home fire escape plan could
save precious seconds in a
real fire emergency and mean
the difference between life and death!**

SrCitsBro.p65

*For more information on fire safety,
contact your local fire department.*

Senior Citizens and Fire Safety



State of New Jersey
James E. McGreevey
Governor



Division of Fire Safety
Lawrence Petrillo
Director



Department of Community Affairs
Susan Bass Levin
Commissioner

In 1993, more people over the age of 65 died in accidental house fires in New Jersey than any other age group. Senior citizens are especially vulnerable to fire - they are slower to respond to emergency situations (often because of medications they are required to take). Consequently, seniors should do everything they can to prevent accidental fires from starting in their homes.

Listed below are several very important fire safety pointers that senior citizens should practice to protect their lives and property.

Smoke Detectors

Smoke detectors protect you day and night. They never sleep - even when you do - and most accidental fires occur while you are asleep. A smoke detector sounds an alarm when a fire is just starting, which enables you to get out of your home and call the fire department, if necessary. Additional escape time is especially important to older people, who are slower to react to emergencies, more quickly overcome by smoke, more easily disoriented, and more likely to fall during an emergency escape. The U.S. Fire Administration says that a properly working smoke detector can cut your chances of dying in a home fire in half. So buy a smoke detector today if you don't already have one, and be sure to change the batteries in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

NOTE: Some fire departments will provide assistance in installing smoke detectors.

Be Careful When You Smoke

A leading cause of fire death for the elderly in New Jersey is careless use of smoking materials. **Never EVER smoke in bed!** It's just too easy to fall asleep, especially late at night, when you're on medication, or when you're not feeling too well. If you smoke, be sure you test your smoke detector at least once a week to make sure it works. If you live with people who smoke, watch them carefully!

Don't put ash trays on the bed, sofa, or the arms of chairs. They're too easy to knock over. Place them on tables, where they're less likely to be tipped over.

Be Especially Careful Around the Stove

Seventy percent of all people who died because their clothing caught fire were over 65 years of age! Long sleeves are more likely to catch fire than are short sleeves. Long sleeves are also more likely to catch on pot handles, which can overturn pots and pans and cause scalds.

To work safely in the kitchen, store all flammable and combustible items away from your stove; roll back long, loose sleeves or fasten them with pins or elastic bands while cooking; remove any towels hanging on oven handles, and if any towels hang on a rack too close to the stove, change the location of the towel rack. Also, shorten or remove any curtains which could come into contact with a hot stove.